

GLOBAL INFORMATION SOCIETY WATCH 2017

*Internet governance from the edges:
National and regional IGFs in their own words*



GISWatch 2017
SPECIAL EDITION

Internet governance from the edges: National and regional IGFs in their own words

Global Information Society Watch 2017 Special edition
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Project coordinators

Maud Barret Bertelloni
Deborah Brown
Anriette Esterhuysen

With the contributions of

Cathy Chen
Flavia Fascendini
Anja Gengo
Lori Nordstrom

Publication production

Cathy Chen and Flavia Fascendini

Proofreading

Valerie Dee
Lori Nordstrom

Graphic design

Monocromo
info@monocromo.com.uy
Phone: +598 2400 1685

Cover illustration

Matias Bervejillo

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Global Information Society Watch 2017 special edition:
Internet governance from the edges: NRIs in their own words

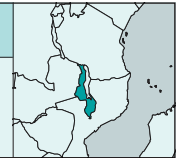
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This report is a special companion edition to Global Information Society Watch 2017: National and Regional Internet Governance Forum Initiatives (NRIs), which can be downloaded from <https://www.giswatch.org/2017-local-and-regional-internet-governance-forums-igfs>

MALAWI IGF

Malawi

Bram Fudzulani • beatblam@hotmail.com • malawi.intgovforum.org



NRI founding stories and development

What is the story of the founding of your NRI? What were its inspiration, its objectives?

The Malawi IGF was inspired by the trend of countries in the Africa region that had established national IGFs and received the NEPAD E-Africa programme funding that allowed us to launch our IGF in 2014 with the following objectives.

The overall objective of the Malawi Internet Governance Forum (Mw-IGF) is to establish a multistakeholder process that will shape the development of Malawi's internet economy.

Specific objectives are:

- To increase awareness and build capacity on internet governance issues amongst stakeholders in Malawi.
- To facilitate the participation of a broad range of Malawian stakeholders in regional and global internet governance and ensure that national concerns are taken into account.
- To shape and inform national policy on development of the internet and ICTs.
- To contribute to strengthening the multistakeholder dialogue model for internet governance in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region and Africa.
- To provide a consultative and participatory platform for multistakeholder discussions and dialogue on internet governance issues.

How did it develop and what difficulties did you experience along the way?

Since its establishment in 2014 the Malawi IGF has faced a number of challenges which made it difficult to hold annual meetings. We are still in the learning process since our inception and still experiencing challenges ranging from adequate funding to stakeholder involvement.

How do you imagine your NRI and its activities in the future?

The future plans are that we need more outreach and engagement with the stakeholders so that they can appreciate the importance of the local IGF.

NRI internal governance and initiatives

Who are the people involved in your NRI and how do they contribute to it?

We have people representing all sectors, and they have been very helpful in session and discussion proposals, as well as playing key roles in ensuring that the various organisations they represent support the local IGF.

Have you experienced difficulties in ensuring all stakeholder groups participate fully and more or less equally?

We did not experience any challenge with this because when we reached out to all they accepted our invitation.

Do you measure gender balance in your NRI? Did you undertake measures to encourage gender balance?

Striking a gender balance has always remained a challenge and we do have measures to encourage gender balance and we work with the Ministry of Gender, Women and Children to ensure the issue of gender imbalance over time becomes addressed.

How was your last forum organised, what were the topics chosen and the outcomes of discussion? How was it financed?

Our 2017 forum was organised through the multi-stakeholder approach whereby all representatives of all sectors were involved in meetings to prepare for the forum and they proposed various topics which were later incorporated into the final

programme. The number one challenge we faced was the issue of finance and locally we only managed to find one organisation which financed the activity. The rest of the finances came from the Internet Governance Forum Support Association (IGFSA) and AFRINIC.

The agenda was as follows:

- Registration
- Session 1: Opening ceremony
- Group photo and coffee break
- Session 2: Introductions and adoption of agenda
- Session 3: Internet Infrastructure Development
- Session 4. IXP- Local Content-Promoting Local Innovation (Panel Session)
- AFRINIC Presentation
- Session 5: Cyber Security – Malawi E-Legislation and How It Relates to the Internet End Users
- Lunch
- Session 6: Internet Applications (panel discussion)
- Session 7: Malawi Internet Governance
- Coffee break
- Session 6: Closing ceremony

Are there controversial topics that have been difficult in your NRI and if so, why?

So far the only controversial ones have been the high costs of internet besides government through World Bank bringing in international fibre backbone which promised to lower access cost to the internet by 70%.

Perspectives on the role of NRIs in internet governance

What is your take about the role of your NRI in internet governance processes, at the level of your country, region and globally?

At country level we are playing a very good role and I think strong NRIs make for strong regional processes. Globally too, in our region we need more to be done to strengthen and promote the initiatives.

How do you perceive your role and position towards other NRIs, the IGF and the IGF Secretariat?

Since we are just new, our position would be that of learning from other well established NRIs and to follow good practices until we are mature enough.

Internet governance from the edges: National and regional IGFs in their own words

National and Regional Internet Governance Forum Initiatives (NRIs) emerged in response to the success of the first two global Internet Governance Forums (IGFs). The Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, the outcome document of the final phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), alongside the call for the creation of the IGF, served as the foundations for the model of bottom-up, multistakeholder internet governance. The first NRIs were set up in 2007 and 2008, and there are now close to a hundred initiatives, comprising national, sub-national, regional and youth initiatives, which organise autonomously and cooperate with the global IGF Secretariat. The importance of NRIs has increased throughout the years, as they have grown in number and their work has expanded in scope. They have acquired such relevance within the IGF that an NRI session was included in the IGF 2016 and 2017 main sessions agendas.

This year, APC has taken the initiative to compile two editions of Global Information Society Watch (GISWatch) focused on the work of NRIs. While the main 2017 GISWatch annual report provides independent and analytical perspectives on the role of NRIs in internet governance broadly, the present companion edition, *Internet governance from the edges: National and regional IGFs in their own words*, aims to give voice and visibility to the stories of each NRI, share their experiences and achievements, and highlight their perspectives on internet governance.

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